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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 1 July 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

later: Mr. HENZE (Germany)
(Vice-President)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION:

(a) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS IN THE AREAS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE FIELD LEVEL (continued) (E/1996/72 and Corr.1)

Mr. BUTLER (Australia) said that any discussion of strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions would be incomplete without consideration of the references to social and economic progress contained in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations and in resolution 50/5 (1995), and of the need to reconcile the development mission of the United Nations with the independence of the Bretton Woods institutions. Focusing on the principle of sustainable human-centred development, inspired by the emerging consensus at the major United Nations conferences, those two sets of institutions had achieved progress in response to the new development agenda. Much remained to be done, however, particularly to alleviate the negative effects of structural adjustment.

The Australian delegation was broadly satisfied that the Bretton Woods institutions were becoming more actively involved in policies aimed at alleviating poverty, responding to the particular problems of Africa and mitigating the negative effects of structural adjustment. Moreover, their unparalleled cooperation on the United Nations Joint and Co-sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS provided a possible blueprint for future cooperation.

At the same time, the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions needed to do more in the field, working hand in hand at the country level to respond to the development challenges and opportunities created by the decolonization process, a task to which the discussions at the Council itself should seek to contribute.

Mr. POERNOMO (Indonesia) said that the scope of development assistance should be broadened to help developing countries at risk of permanent

marginalization. To that end, there was a vital need for strengthened cooperation and broad harmonization of priorities between the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. The proposed one-day policy dialogue on important development issues to be held during the General Assembly would be a practical step in that direction.

Although such cooperation was important, the United Nations should be careful, however, not to add to the conditionalities often associated with the development assistance given by the Bretton Woods institutions. Experience had shown that using financial assistance as a means of effecting policy change was often detrimental to growth and development.

In order to maximize the benefits of development cooperation and provide a more structured arrangement than at present, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should formulate guidelines for cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, providing a clearer focus and direction to their work on policy and in the field. In addition, better use should be made of the resident coordinator system as a way of instituting sustained dialogue and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort. Working in harmony with national plans and strategies, those institutions should develop a more balanced approach to achieving sustainable development, focusing on "self-propelling growth schemes".

Mr. ROHNER (Observer for Switzerland), endorsing the views expressed by the delegation of Italy on behalf of the European Union and by the delegation of Australia, said that the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions were faced with the task of improving cooperation in order to make better use of diminishing development assistance resources. In that regard, considerable progress had already been made, with closer links being developed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bretton Woods institutions, and greater intellectual convergence on policy-making and in the follow-up to United Nations conferences.

However, much remained to be done. While mutual participation at round tables and in consultative bodies had improved, Switzerland did not support proposals for broadening attendance at regular meetings. It favoured instead the holding of special, thematic meetings to which specialized agencies would be invited. There was also a need for more systematic cooperation in the field,

with the partners working together to elaborate country strategy notes and programmes, as well as development assistance plans.

In implementing the programme approach, there should be more co-financing and parallel financing by the partners, making better use of their comparative advantage. In that context, the evolving relationship between UNDP and the World Bank might be a model for future forms of cooperation.

Both sets of institutions should improve professional training for their personnel working in specialized sectors, particularly at the regional and local levels. To that end, they should organize personnel secondments on a more frequent basis. The Secretariat might also consider conducting a number of cooperation case-studies, partly funded by the Swiss delegation, as a complement to the efforts of interdepartmental working groups on ways of improving cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.

In the long run, however, such efforts could only succeed if the United Nations had sufficient resources to play its part in international cooperation for development.

Mr. MONTOYA (Colombia) said that the issue of institutional cooperation had become more urgent as globalization of markets threatened to undermine intergovernmental collaboration. The United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should seek to enhance their relations through a comprehensive, transparent and constructive approach to development cooperation. In order to achieve the goal of greater coordination, the Bretton Woods institutions should review their policies and change their philosophy, taking into account not only economic factors.

Unless the Bretton Woods institutions contributed effectively to solving such problems as external debt, the negative effects of structural adjustment and the decline in resources for development, it would be difficult to achieve real interinstitutional collaboration. Moreover, without resources or a clear commitment in solving the financial crisis in the United Nations, the discussion of coordination and collaboration would be little more than an intellectual exercise.

The Secretariat had made some commendable recommendations but it was not clear whether the United Nations should assist in mitigating the effects of structural adjustment programmes, since it was the Bretton Woods institutions which had insisted on the developing countries' adopting such programmes. The

recommendation that the concessional assistance mechanisms such as the International Development Association should be reviewed was also a cause of serious concern. Humanitarian assistance should not be increased at the expense of resources for development. Moreover the recommendation was inappropriate since it had nothing to do with interinstitutional collaboration.

Mr. YUAN Shaofu (China) said that his delegation believed that strengthening collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions was only a means to the end of being able to respond in a timely, flexible and positive way to the changing development needs and priorities of recipient countries. Such collaboration should be linked to the ongoing reforms of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. In order to derive maximum benefit from assistance it was necessary first to strengthen the policy dialogue at the headquarters level. At the country level, all institutions must fully respect the wishes and preferences of the recipient Government. In practice, coordination between the various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system had not always been smooth and successful.

The type of assistance provided by the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions differed in character, criteria and approach. There was understandable concern that collaboration would cause the operational activities for development of the United Nations system to be constrained by the restrictive loan policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, thereby adding new conditionalities; United Nations technical assistance must maintain its neutrality and grant nature.

Mr. KAMANDO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation was pleased at the emerging consensus on the need to intensify cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. In order to have effective programme delivery at the country level, it was necessary also to collaborate in the formulation of policy. His delegation would like to see intensified collaboration in harmonizing the process of preparing country policy framework papers, country strategy notes and the recently introduced country cooperation framework paper, but that process should not lead to the introduction of added conditionalities.

Tanzania had been pleased to hear from the representative of the World Bank that structural adjustment was dead. His Government was of the view that the

Bretton Woods institutions should adopt a more flexible and realistic approach, in which reform measures would be based on development strategies prepared by the recipient country in accordance with its own priorities. It welcomed the Special Initiative on Africa, and would like the Secretariat to explain how the Special Initiative and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s would be made operational.

Mr. GOUMENNY (Observer for Ukraine) said that strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions was one of the main conditions for the establishment of a reliable financial basis from which to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in overcoming their economic instability, allowing significant future savings of financial resources. Increased resources provided by international development organizations would also allow the strengthening of market economies, leading to greater international security.

At the national level, more coordination was needed to assist countries with economies in transition to develop market strategies that would mesh with other international efforts. His delegation commended the reorganization of the World Bank/UNDP task force, which was to play a greater role in harmonizing policy. Linking the preparatory processes of the policy framework paper and country strategy notes would be very useful, as would the memoranda of understanding and cooperation agreements between agencies.

Mrs. SIRAL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that recent trends in development cooperation suggested that the sharp division of responsibilities between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions was becoming blurred. The development banks were reorienting a sizeable part of their investment towards the social sector and the private sector was now providing considerable contributions to infrastructure. Since a multilateral institution's policies were determined by the States members and since prime responsibility for coordination of development aid in a country lay with the recipient State, real coordination would not be possible without the political will and support of States.

Even though World Bank loans were required to make a profit and the United Nations system provided assistance on a subsidy basis, closer links between the two would be helpful for many reasons. Coordination must be based on a concept of complementarity between the two major multilateral actors, which might change

form over the course of the programming process. At the beginning of the process, the United Nations system might be better placed than an investment body to help Member States to shape their sectoral policies and analyse their needs. Later on the Bretton Woods institutions might have a major role to play in designing investment programmes.

The triennial review of operational activities had shown that collaboration at the national level was, at best, partial, and often only sporadic. On the other hand, at the international level, collaboration was becoming more systematic. Some practical ways of ensuring closer collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions would include formalizing their cooperation on certain points, making effective use of the central role and system-wide expertise of the resident coordinator and aiming at greater complementarity and consistency between the country strategy note and major economic policy documents.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ (Observer for Cuba) said that her country was prepared to support any initiative to resolve or alleviate the problems of developing countries. Progress had been made in cooperation among the institutions of the United Nations system, and the World Bank's expertise in environmental issues was well known. Nevertheless, Cuba believed that structural adjustment programmes had had a significant negative impact on the majority of developing countries, particularly in the social sector.

The Bretton Woods institutions had a specific mandate, a limited membership, a weighted voting system and provided loans, in contrast with the open and universal membership of the United Nations, the equality and equity of its system of voting and governance, and the grant nature of its aid. Therefore, her delegation was of the view that the main purpose of cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system should be to increase available resources on a predictable, sustained and secure basis. The neutral, multilateral, universal and voluntary nature of United Nations activities must be preserved, especially as they related to development. The operational activities of the United Nations system could not be based on the conditionalities practised by the international financial institutions. Furthermore, the role of the General Assembly as the main forum for political, economic and financial decision-making should not be weakened.

At the field level, collaboration was based on the use of the country strategy note mechanism. It should be stressed that the preparation of such an instrument was voluntary, and the decision should be for the Government alone to make. Use of the country strategy note to strengthen collaboration could give rise to discrimination against those countries which had decided not to prepare such a note. Cooperation at the field level must be based on national priorities established by the Governments themselves.

Mr. AGUILAR (Observer for the United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that as part of its reform programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) had launched a special initiative to broaden its cooperation with other organizations in the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. UNIDO had reached agreement with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to support an efficient international trading system in the manufacturing field, and had signed memorandums of understanding with other agencies to increase cooperation in the fields of science, technology, investment promotion and enterprise development.

UNIDO and the World Bank had agreed to focus their cooperation on privatization and industrial enterprise restructuring, quality and standards in industry, competitiveness and productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises, and design and implementation of build-operate-transfer schemes in developing countries.

At the operational level, UNIDO had implemented the technical cooperation components of projects funded by bank loans and credits. A total of 17 such projects with a total value of $16 million had currently been approved. They covered a wide range of issues including sustainable industrial development strategies, human resource development, privatization, industrial rehabilitation and maintenance and institutional capacity-building.

UNIDO and the International Finance Corporation were also planning joint activities to promote private investment in developing countries, and the World Bank's Economic Development Institute had collaborated with UNIDO in providing training to potential managers from countries with transitional economies. UNIDO and the World Bank had also cooperated closely in the implementation and integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences. Within the United Nations system, UNIDO remained the primary source of industrial statistics.

Mr. AMORIM (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), said that cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions at the field level could not be improved without greater cocperation at the intergovernmental and secretariat levels. While the civil war in the development family over structural adjustment was officially over, discrepancies still remained between the policy framework provided by the United Nations on issues related to economic growth, social development and environmental protection, and the strategies followed by the Bretton Woods institutions.

The promotion of greater cooperation between the two groups required a comprehensive approach that encompassed not only new initiatives and measures at the operational level but also closer collaboration at the conceptual level. Pragmatism could not survive without some degree of intellectual convergence. He therefore regretted the current gap between the willingness to promote cooperation at the field level and the reservations that still prevented more substantial debates between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions on central economic issues. He also regretted the failure of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to give concrete responses during the current session to the questions raised by the Council concerning strengthened cooperation between the two groups at the macroeconomic level.

Turning to the note by the Secretariat on operational activities of the United Nations for international development coordination (E/1996/72), he said that the countries of MERCOSUR were particularly concerned about the reference to linking the preparatory processes of the policy framework paper and country strategy note. It would be useful to know what the implications of that linkage were in terms of the decision-making capacity of recipient countries with respect to their own programmes.

With regard to the common understanding of the 20/20 initiative, it would be interesting to know how the institutions in question envisaged their respective roles in the implementation of that initiative. He supported the suggestions made in paragraph 12 of the note by the Secretariat to avoid situations in which the Bretton Woods institutions initiated and implemented projects falling within the competence of other agencies without adequate consultations or the engagement of their regional and national offices.

The countries of MERCOSUR would welcome clarification of the proposal to establish mechanisms in support of regional offices of smaller agencies and of how such mechanisms could strengthen regional integration processes. Concerning joint meetings between the Council and other bodies, it would be interesting to know why only the Bank/Fund Development Committee had been mentioned in the note of the Secretariat. Finally, given the growing importance of regional integration processes in the developing world and in the international economy as a whole, the note should have made more direct reference to cooperation at the regional level.

Mr. GALVEZ (Chile) said that the two major objectives of economic and social development were to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life of people everywhere. The attainment of those objectives required closer collaboration between the United Nations development agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions as well as a dialogue between Governments and other development actors on the importance of good governance at both the national and international levels. The notion of good governance in the service of people-centred economic and social development needed to be further elaborated at the conceptual level as part of the emerging intellectual convergence on what constituted sound development policies.

Given the existing consensus that economic and social development should be people-centred, it was now for the international community to develop a framework for good governance at the national and international levels aimed at achieving that objective. Towards that end, the Inter-Agency Task Force on the enabling environment for social and economic development should focus on good governance in the sense of the importance of the rule of law, including an independent judiciary, to the achievement of economic and social development; good governance, in the sense of the effectiveness of the State machinery; and good governance in terms of broad community participation in public life.

Mr. KRLIU (Observer for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that the ultimate objective of closer cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions was not to compromise the latter's indépen ence but to enhance the ability of States to influence their work in a positive way. It was important for both the United Nations development agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions to become more actively involved in the region of the Balkans. Cooperation between the two groups could

help to speed up economic development and hasten the Europeanization of the region. In that connection, General Assembly resolution 50/80 B provided a good basis for the activities of United Nations agencies in the region.

Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Observer for Kazakstan) said that international development cooperation could become more productive through closer collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions based on the commonality of interests and better support for national development efforts. Such collaboration currently encompassed a broad range of activities in the areas of economic reform, social development and the environment, among others. Her delegation welcomed the suggestions contained in the note by the Secretariat (E/1996/72) for the further strengthening of that collaboration at all levels, including the field level.

Kazakstan wished to acknowledge the major role played by UNDP in strengthening coordination within the United Nations system and in assisting newly independent States in formulating development strategies and strengthening management capacities. Together with the World Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP had provided substantial support for the preparation of the Aral Sea Action Plan, which was designed to reverse 40 years of water resource mismanagement and environmental destruction in the countries of the Aral Sea basin.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES (E/1996/4 and Corr.1, E/1996/18 and Add.1)

(a) COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ACTIVITIES FOR POVERTY ERADICATION (E/1996/61)

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication (E/1996/61), said that it was important for the Council at its current session to provide a sense of direction to the work of the United Nations system in the field of poverty eradication.

The report focused on three principal areas: coordinated United Nations support for and availability of resources for poverty eradication activities at the field level, mainstreaming the gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication, and a harmonized and integrated approach to intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication. United Nations

activities in support of poverty eradication at the field level must be carried out within the framework of the strategies which national Governments had committed themselves to formulate at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. Country-level coordination of those activities was in fact the primary responsibility of the Government in all recipient countries. However, the resident coordinator system played an important role as a coordination mechanism as well, as it enhanced harmonization and cooperation within the United Nations system at the country level and promoted the integration of United Nations system support with national development orientations.

With regard to the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication, the message from the Fourth World Conference on Women was that, given the increasing feminization of poverty and unemployment, gender equality concerns should be reflected in the work of all United Nations bodies concerned with poverty eradication.

Of crucial importance was the need for a harmonized and integrated approach to intergovernmental consideration of poverty eradication. Because poverty eradication was high on the priorities of Member States, the issue was considered in many different forums and often in a repetitive and unfocused way. It was essential to avoid such fragmentation of the discussion and to provide focused and coherent policy direction through the intergovernmental process. The policy framework chart on page 36 of the report showed how the mandates of the various bodies involved in poverty eradication could be organized in a way that ensured the unity of policy directions and approaches through the General Assembly and the Council. Indeed, improved coordination at the field and inter-secretariat levels could help to ensure that poverty eradication became the organizing principle around which United Nations development activities were carried out.

Mr. HENZE (Germany), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. ACUÑA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group agreed with the Secretary-General's view that the eradication of poverty was a major challenge for the United Nations. Given the variety of mandates and activities of bodies within the United Nations system, harmonization and coordination were crucial. Poverty was no longer a country-specific problem, and the Secretary-General's report correctly stated that the United Nations system should be an advocate for the poor. However, the

Organization was answerable to Member States and should respond to the mandates which emerged from the system. In that regard, he reminded the Council that the international community had committed itself to the eradication of poverty through decisive action at both national and international level.

At the same time declining resource commitments to multilateral development institutions had made it very difficult for those institutions to respond adequately to the massive challenge which they faced. Those cuts threatened to undermine the poverty-eradication objectives agreed at major international conferences. New and additional resources therefore had to be mobilized. In that connection, his delegation hoped that the phrase "total allocations for multilateral institutions" in Recommendation 2 of the Secretary-General's report (E/1996/61) should read "total allocations from multilateral institutions".

The Group had been surprised to find that the spirit, context and language of the Copenhagen Programme of Action had not been included in the Secretary-General's report. The Programme of Action clearly stated that work carried out by developing countries with respect to development indicators should be specifically taken into account, and that the national capacities of developing countries should be strengthened through technical assistance.

His delegation also wished to point out that participation by representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the resident coordinator system had been uneven and varied from country to country. Country strategy notes should always be coordinated with the relevant country's overall plans and programmes. Because country strategy notes were always voluntary and Government-driven, other ways of ensuring coordinated response from the United Nations system should also be explored. Strengthened cooperation between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions should not lead to new conditionalities or turn operational activities into the same restrictive policies normally associated with programme lending.

International cooperation on eradication of poverty should take place not only at the country level but at all levels. At the policy level, the system should be capable of providing coherent advice on economic and social policy.

Although the market economy was generally believed to be the most efficient way of ensuring economic progress, such a consensus should not imply the end of development strategies. Wholesale conversion to market economics would not

automatically produce solutions to the serious problems currently afflicting the international and national economies. In that regard his delegation wished to highlight the importance of the role of the International Labour Organization in coordinating efforts with the United Nations system to promote programmes for generating productive employment. The Commission for Social Development should maintain a broad approach in dealing with the issue of poverty eradication, while the contribution of the functional commissions should be confined to their own fields of competence in so far as they related to poverty eradication.

Direct programmes to alleviate poverty had to be supplemented by parallel effective economic policies which generated employment and determined a better pattern of growth. His delegation therefore reiterated the importance of greater coordination among the various organizations of the United Nations system. No single organization had the mandate or capacity to tackle poverty in its entirety. Differences in mandates should be a source of strength within the system and make for a comprehensive approach to poverty eradication. Such potential strength could become a weakness, however, if various organizations in the international system presented countries with differing policy signals. To be effective, policy advice had to be consistent and to comprise a coherent set of mutually reinforcing policy recommendations for country-level action.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Ireland) speaking on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that the primary responsibility for the assessment of poverty situations and the formulation and implementation of national poverty eradication plans and programmes lay with Governments, and the role of the United Nations system was to support Governments in their efforts. In order to fulfil that role, the United Nations system must adopt a coordinated and integrated approach both at Headquarters and in the field with regard to implementing the outcome of recent conferences and issuing policy guidance measures relating to the eradication of poverty. What was needed was a cross-sectoral approach and the incorporation of the gender perspective as a matter of course into all United Nations activities.

The European Union welcomed the decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to review the outcome of international conferences in a global manner and its establishment of ad hoc task forces. It was important to avoid unnecessary duplication in the work of the task forces and it was also essential

that the global review should integrate their findings and produce clear guidelines. While it was vital to have clear guidelines at Headquarters, implementation at the field level would remain the crucial measure of the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities.

His delegation would appreciate additional information on how the United Nations system intended to coordinate its support for the development of specific anti-poverty plans and programmes through capacity-building and technical assistance. His Government believed that better use could be made of the thematic groups to encourage broad participation in discussions on poverty; the country strategy note should, where possible, be the main instrument for the elaboration of poverty eradication plans and programmes.

Interaction between directions coming from Headquarters and input from the field back into the system was an essential ingredient of an effective and integrated approach to the eradication of poverty. His delegation would have appreciated more information in that regard.

The support of the international community both at the bilateral and multilateral level was essential in helping to create an environment in which Governments could take the lead in assessing poverty situations and developing national poverty eradication strategies and programmes. The effective mobilization of financial resources for poverty eradication and a more effective orientation of development cooperation and assistance needed to be fully explored.

In recent years, the number of women living in poverty had increased disproportionately to the number of men, particularly in developing countries. Governments and the international community had made detailed and specific commitments to address the structural causes of poverty and the specific obstacles which militated against women. The primary responsibility for the implementation of those commitments rested at the national level. Such efforts should also involve individual women, women's groups and non-governmental organizations at all levels.

The commitments which had been undertaken and the analysis which underpinned them should form the basis of the efforts of the United Nations system to mainstream a gender perspective into the coordinated follow-up to major international conferences and into all activities relevant to the eradication of poverty. The European Union fully endorsed that approach, and

also believed in the need to provide appropriate training on gender issues to United Nations personnel in order to make them fully aware of the requirements of mainstreaming a gender perspective into poverty eradication activities.

It was important to ensure that the specific roles and mandates of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions were clearly identified in order to avoid duplication. The role of the specialized agencies should also be taken into account. The General Assembly should provide the broad policy framework; the Council should provide guidance to the United Nations system on coordination matters and integrate the work of the functional commissions; and the functional commissions themselves should be assigned specific responsibility for monitoring implementation of commitments undertaken.

The Commission for Social Development had been designated by the General Assembly as the functional commission with the primary responsibility for follow-up to and review of the World Summit for Social Development, where issues relating to poverty eradication had been considered in depth. It was therefore important to strengthen Secretariat support for that Commission, which would also benefit from a more committed approach by Governments.

Given the increasing feminization of poverty, the Commission on the Status of Women also had a key role to play in the debate on the eradication of poverty. The European Union welcomed the fact that the programmes of work of the two Commissions made it possible for each to benefit from the views and input of the other.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.